

Top Secret

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Tuesday March 22, 1977

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Tuesday, March 22, 1977.

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The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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INDIA: Election Return

25X1 [] Prime Minister Gandhi's stinging personal defeat yesterday and her Congress Party's large loss of parliamentary seats usher in a new and highly uncertain era in Indian politics.

25X1 [] Final results of the four-day poll which were tabulated yesterday may not be announced until Tuesday.

25X1 [] As of 5:00 am (EST) this morning, the Congress Party was trailing badly but it was uncertain whether the opposition united front--the Janata or People's Party--would be able to secure a majority on its own or with the support of its allies.

25X1 [] An aide to the Prime Minister said Gandhi would submit her resignation today, but she may wait until a new government is formed. The Congress Party presumably is also desperately trying to muster a majority and seeking support from the pro-Soviet Communist Party--its occasional ally--and from independents and small regional parties.

25X1 [] The Congress Party suffered its greatest losses in the heavily populated northern states where Gandhi's authoritarian rule, and particularly the sterilization drive, antagonized large numbers of traditional rural supporters. Several cabinet ministers, Gandhi's controversial son Sanjay, and other officials closely identified with the national emergency Gandhi imposed in 1975 were also defeated.

25X1 [] Should the Congress Party secure a majority, senior party members probably would bypass Gandhi in favor of a new prime minister. The strongest contender is Foreign Minister Y. B. Chavan, a veteran cabinet member with generally moderate views.

25X1 [] Gandhi apparently could legally remain as Prime Minister with her party's support, even though she lost her parliamentary seat, by running in a by-election within six months. Party leaders, however, are probably anxious to oust her. They may, in fact, have forced her to agree to repeal the emergency at a special cabinet session this morning that was followed by

a presidential order lifting the emergency. This move may also have been an effort to deprive Gandhi of the possible option of reimposing emergency measures or trying to invalidate the election results.

25X1 [] A Janata Party victory would represent a major upheaval in the post-independence period, which has been dominated by the Congress Party and, except for a brief period, by the Nehru family.

25X1 [] The Janata Party is essentially an opportunistic union of four ideologically diverse parties united by little more than a determination to defeat Gandhi. The partners could encounter crippling internal power struggles in their attempt to govern the nation.

25X1 [] In a prime minister they might compromise in the choice of the Janata chairman, 81-year-old Moraraji Desai. Desai is a staunch conservative known for his inflexibility, self-righteousness, and pro-Western outlook.

25X1 [] Another possibility is former Agriculture Minister Jagjivan Ram. Ram resigned from Gandhi's cabinet last month and founded his own party but agreed to cooperate with the Janata Party. []

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USSR: Brezhnev's Speech

25X1 [] Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev has strongly criticized US "intervention" in the USSR's internal affairs, sounded a highly reserved note on the prospects for Secretary Vance's visit, and delivered an unusually strong attack on Soviet dissidents. Brezhnev made his comments in a speech to the Soviet trade union congress yesterday.

25X1 [] Brezhnev's criticism of US policies on "human rights" issues went no further than recent Soviet commentary, and he tempered his remarks by reaffirming a continued Soviet desire for detente and by expressing optimism about long-term US-Soviet relations. In general, however, Brezhnev's remarks represent a toughening of the USSR's line on US-Soviet relations in response

to US policy pronouncements in recent weeks. Brezhnev spoke on the eve of Secretary Vance's trip, and after being absent from public view for a month.

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[] US embassy officials in Moscow report that Brezhnev's performance in delivering the two-hour long speech was the poorest they had seen since he spoke in August 1975 at the European security conference summit. Although his physical appearance betrayed no unusual signs of ill health, Brezhnev seemed tired and spoke very slowly.

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[] Brezhnev's political, as well as personal, health may have suffered during the last few months, and internal political as well as foreign policy considerations probably account for Brezhnev's tough tone. Brezhnev may have been attempting to respond to domestic criticism about his handling of the Soviet dissidence problem and of Soviet-US relations.

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[] Brezhnev's central message was to warn the US to keep "hands off" Soviet internal matters. Brezhnev did not mention President Carter by name, but he charged "official American bodies" with "outright attempts" to interfere in Soviet internal affairs. He clearly gave the impression that the US must scale down protests about human rights violations in the Soviet Union if there is to be an improvement in US-Soviet relations. In the face of US "interference," Brezhnev emphasized, "normal development" of relations is "unthinkable."

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[] The Soviet leader stopped short of suggesting that human rights issues directly threaten the SALT negotiations, but he indicated that the policies of the US administration on human rights, coupled with an alleged "slandorous" campaign to portray the Soviet Union as a military threat, were poisoning the overall atmosphere of detente.

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[] Brezhnev stated that the development of bilateral relations "requires a certain level of mutual understanding and at least a minimum of mutual tact." Regarding Secretary Vance's visit, Brezhnev said with a shrug, "we will see what he brings with him."

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[redacted] Brezhnev nevertheless reaffirmed a desire for "detente to continue." He mentioned SALT, other arms control measures, the end of trade discrimination, and the Middle East as areas where agreement was attainable. He stated that Soviet-US relations are based on a "sound foundation" provided by the agreements signed between 1972 and 74. Brezhnev said that while relations are now stagnating, there are "great overall possibilities" for further cooperation.

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[redacted] Brezhnev's remarks concerning Soviet dissidents were sharp and uncompromising. He delivered this part of the speech in a tone that had the ring of true conviction, according to US embassy officials characterizing the dissidents as "opponents of socialism," if not "agents of imperialism," he asserted that "we have taken and will take against them the measures envisaged by law." These remarks contrasted sharply with Brezhnev's speech at Tula on January 18, when he spoke only generally about "opponents of detente" and did not mention Soviet dissidents.

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[redacted] In the Middle East segment of the speech, Brezhnev revived many of the features of a Soviet proposal, first made in December 1968, for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem. He gave the appearance of being flexible and made a renewed effort to project the USSR into a leading role in the negotiating process.

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[redacted] Brezhnev made the standard Soviet demands for Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied in 1967, for creation of a Palestinian state, and for recognition of the inviolability of agreed borders of all states in the area. The Soviet leader, however, coupled these demands with endorsement of several specific suggestions: that an Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories might be conducted in several stages over a period of months; that a final agreement provide for passage of ships of all countries, including Israel, through the Strait of Tiran, the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Suez Canal; and that demilitarized zones might be created on both sides of established borders.

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[redacted]

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UK: Confidence Vote

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[REDACTED] //The British Labor government's chances of surviving tomorrow's vote of confidence in Parliament dimmed somewhat over the weekend when the Liberal Party disclosed the demands it expects Labor to meet in order to gain its support. A defeat would bring the resignation of Prime Minister Callaghan and a call for a national election--probably in late April--that could result in a Conservative victory.//

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[REDACTED] //The Liberals said they will vote against the government unless they see some modification in Labor's position on tax reform, industrial policy and the question of proportional representation in Parliament. The Liberals have long viewed the latter issue as the key to increasing their parliamentary strength. Although the Liberals appear to be standing

firm, they have much to gain by making a deal with Callaghan and avoiding an election now. Public opinion polls show that the Liberals' support has eroded considerably since the last election in 1974 when they won 13 seats.//

25X1 [REDACTED]

25X1 [REDACTED] //The Conservatives, who have been somewhat reluctant in past months to force a vote of confidence because they had no program for the country's ills to offer, probably want to move now while the polls seem to be running in their favor. 25X1 [REDACTED]

USSR: Comments on East Berlin

25X1 [REDACTED] The Soviet embassy in East Berlin has "clarified" remarks of its ambassador there who, during a press conference on March 10, appeared to deny that the Western Allies have military rights in East Berlin.

25X1 [REDACTED] The March 11 issue of *Neues Deutschland*, the East German party daily, quoted Soviet Ambassador Abrasimov as having said "there is no such thing" as "military rights of the three Western powers" in the Eastern sector of Berlin. Abrasimov insisted that East Berlin is the capital of East Germany and thus an integral part of the German Democratic Republic. He said the USSR does not challenge Allied rights in West Berlin, where "three occupation zones actually still exist."

25X1 [REDACTED] An article in the Soviet party daily *Pravda*, however, did not include the controversial segment of Abrasimov's remarks.

25X1 [REDACTED] Moscow now maintains that Abrasimov was misquoted by the East German newspaper, which incorrectly translated his remarks from Russian into German. In a correction to the *Neues Deutschland* article given to Western newsmen, the Soviets have tried to make clear that Abrasimov disputed only the formulation "Eastern sector." They allege he did not deny that the Allies still have military rights in East Berlin.

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[redacted] In an interview in the East German weekly *Horizont* on March 16, Abrasimov also accused "certain Western politicians and newspapers" of turning his remarks around.

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[redacted] We do not know whether Moscow instructed Abrasimov--who is a hard-liner--to make his statement challenging Allied military rights in East Berlin, or whether he went beyond his instructions. The East Germans may also have taken liberties in reporting Abrasimov's statement. In any case, the publicity given Abrasimov's remarks seems to have evoked some Soviet concern.

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[redacted] Moscow has strongly backed East Germany's recent efforts to erode the special status of East Berlin. The Soviets, however, have been careful to avoid challenging Allied military rights there. Recent East German measures--such as the new "road use fee" charged to vehicles entering East Berlin from the West--have not been applied to Allied vehicles, and the East has not interfered with Western military patrols in the city's Eastern half. [redacted]

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SOMALIA: Siad Not Going to Summit

25X1 [] Somali President Siad has reportedly decided not to attend today's summit meeting in Taiz, North Yemen, where the leaders of Sudan and both Yemens will discuss the security of the Red Sea region. If he had attended the summit--where Sudanese President Numayri will urge the Yemenis to curb growing Soviet and leftist influence in the region--Siad would have risked annoying the USSR.

25X1 [] Siad appears to have been irked by recent Soviet and Cuban overtures to Ethiopia, but he is apparently not ready to attend a meeting that will be so explicitly directed against Soviet influence in the Red Sea area.

25X1 [] Siad apparently is attempting to minimize any damage to Somalia's relations with its Arab neighbors. He told Numayri--who visited Mogadiscio from March 17 to 20--that he generally agreed with the objectives of the conference and asked Numayri to represent him there. The talks between Numayri and Siad reportedly were cordial. []

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ZAIRE: Military Situation

25X1 [] //The military situation in Zaire's Shaba Province apparently changed little over the weekend. Although earlier reports suggested that government troops had battled Katangan forces in Kasaji on Saturday, [] Zairian forward units are slightly west of Mutshatsha and have not yet begun an offensive.//

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25X1 [] In the south, Zairian forces have set up a defensive position west of Mutshatsha and a tactical headquarters in Kolwezi. Most of the 800-man task force airlifted to Shaba last week from the north is now in Kamina and the air force

has moved a few helicopters to Kolwezi. Ground attack aircraft have flown over Katangan-held territory, but the US embassy reports that their attacks were ineffective.

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[REDACTED] //The Zairians apparently are planning an offensive for later this week. The military, however, still has fuel, ammunition and logistics problems, as well as low morale. According to the US consulate in Lubumbashi, Zairian soldiers have been deserting in some number.//

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PAKISTAN: Political Situation

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[REDACTED] The US embassy believes that the Pakistani opposition will view Prime Minister Bhutto's offer to free some of the opposition leaders arrested last week as a sign of weakness. Retired Air Marshal Asghar Khan's refusal to leave jail unless all political prisoners are freed and the rejection of Bhutto's latest offer to talk may be evidence that his opponents intend to exploit this opening. One opposition leader has announced that Bhutto's decision to convene the National Assembly next Saturday is a provocative act that will lead to violence.

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[redacted] Demonstrations against Bhutto continued yesterday. In Karachi, the scene of much violence last week, there were only scattered incidents; both a curfew and a general strike are in effect.

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[redacted] despite the arrest of 2,000 opposition workers in Karachi alone, the opposition continues to gain strength. [redacted] its operations in the city are coming under the control of more radical leaders. [redacted] the government's control has been seriously weakened in major cities in Sind Province and to a lesser extent in Punjab Province.// [redacted]

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KENYA: Kenyatta's Health and Party Politics

[redacted] A further decline in Kenyan President Kenyatta's health over the past week and the impending election for senior positions in Kenya's ruling party have accelerated maneuvering among aspirants for leadership.

[redacted] The determination and sense of urgency among the contenders will probably continue to increase in the two weeks before the election, especially if Kenyatta's health takes another turn for the worse. The rival factions still appear inclined to keep their activities within constitutional limits.

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[redacted] Should Kenyatta die or be medically certified as incapacitated, Vice President Moi would assume the presidency for

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90 days under the terms of the constitution. Several months ago Moi--a member of the Kalenjin tribal group--beat back a campaign by his opponents to divest him of this constitutional role. His adversaries include members of Kenyatta's inner circle who are determined to maintain the powerful position of their Kikuyu tribe--especially Kenyatta's southern branch--after Kenyatta dies.

25X1 [] In recent months, Moi's opponents have switched their efforts to secure power in the country's only political party, the Kenya Africa National Union. If the vice president were to become interim president, the constitution would require an election during the 90-day period, provided at least two presidential candidates are nominated by different political parties. In the absence of another party, the candidate from the Union party would be declared the elected president. As interim president, Moi would be in a position to gain control of the party structure and secure its nomination.

25X1 [] In a further effort to undercut Moi's position, his rivals prevailed on Kenyatta last year to order a revitalization of the moribund party. This effort began with local elections late last year--in which Moi and his supporters held their own. The revitalization culminates in the election of senior officials on April 3.

25X1 [] The southern Kikuyu establishment is handicapped in this election by its lack of popular leaders other than Kenyatta. The Kikuyu situation is further complicated by a long-standing split between the southern and northern branches of the tribe.

25X1 [] At the moment, the southern Kikuyu appear willing to concede the party vice presidency to Moi, while making a determined bid for other top party jobs with Kikuyu candidates or their allies. So far, those few candidates challenging Moi for re-election to the vice presidency are non-Kikuyu and have little chance of success.

25X1 [] The Kikuyu appear to be concentrating on electing one of their own to the national chairmanship, the third-ranking party job. The post is new and its duties are vague. An aggressive chairman, or one with aggressive backers, could become de facto party head, especially if Kenyatta and Moi continue to be preoccupied with national affairs.

[] At the moment, Defense Minister Gichuru, a relatively popular southern Kikuyu, and Finance Minister Kibaki, a northerner, have declared for the chairmanship. It is unclear which candidate will eventually receive full Kikuyu backing, although it appears that Kibaki has been given at least a preliminary nod, while Gichuru's candidacy was self-initiated.

[] Kibaki is considered to be one of the outstanding members of the cabinet. Although he has reportedly been linked to Moi, he generally has avoided politics. As a result, he probably is one of the few Kikuyus who could generate support among both branches of the group. The Kikuyu establishment also probably realizes Kibaki's ascendancy could ensure the tribe's continued hegemony and help to stabilize the political scene.

[] More developments are in store before the election. Leaders of other important tribes such as the Luo and Kamba have not made their intentions clear. Moreover, unexpected candidacies and withdrawals have been a feature of the campaign, reflecting personal ambitions and the ephemeral nature of Kenyan political loyalties.

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